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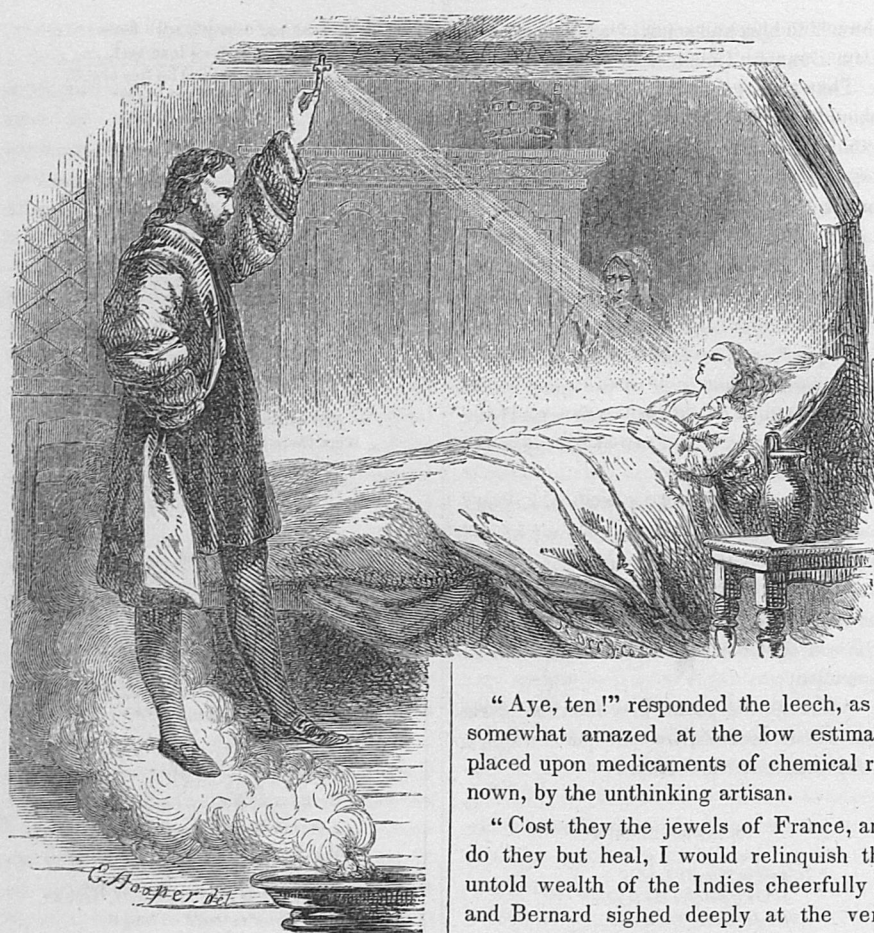
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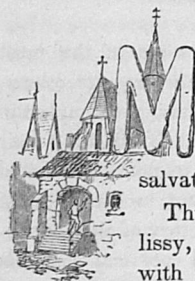


PALISSY THE POTTER.

An Art-Romance.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE PRINCESS OF VIARNA."

CHAPTER THE FIRST—POVERTY.



MOST worthy leech, thinkest thou that human means will avail towards effecting her salvation?

Thus spoke Bernard Palissy, as he stood, covered with the midnight dew, before the ponderous door of a chirurgion's shop, overshadowed by the tall and pointed roof of the parish church of Saintes. There was an energy and earnestness in his words, which touched the Italian mountebank to the very heart, and he hesitated a few moments before he deliberately answered the pertinent query.

"She will not die," slowly drawled forth the chirurgion. "Still, the medicaments will cost her much."

"A golden livre?" nervously interrupted the artisan.

"Aye, ten!" responded the leech, as if somewhat amazed at the low estimate placed upon medicaments of chemical renown, by the unthinking artisan.

"Cost they the jewels of France, and do they but heal, I would relinquish the untold wealth of the Indies cheerfully;" and Bernard sighed deeply at the very thought of any inefficiency of the drug he solicited. "Now haste, good leech, for we have but little time; for death comes upon us apace, and none know the hour of his coming."

"Too true," sluggishly replied the Italian, who leisurely proceeded to arrange his garments for his night journey, regardless of the impatience of his visitor, who repeatedly urged him to accelerate his movements. The leech viewed the death-bed but as an ordinary incident in his professional career. The distracted father saw in the approach of the dread spectre the annihilation of his future—the decay of all incentive towards accomplishment of his ambition.

Upon a coarse trundle bed, surrounded by few if any conveniences necessary to the comfort of an invalid, lay the object of Bernard's early solicitude—the once bright-eyed, fair-haired beauty, his favorite daughter, who had grown in years entwined to his heart, as the humble vine entwines itself around the trunk of the massive oak. Madeline, the artisan's daughter, was a lovely girl of some twelve years, whose frame lay in a state of apparent exhaustion—a cold perspiration standing in

huge drops upon her marble brow, while with difficulty she drew her broken respiration. But a few days before, she had bounded across the summer-grounds in the full gaiety of health; now, stricken by a sudden epidemic, the lapse of passing moments had done the work of pestilential years, and the angel of Palissy's household hovered between the walk of life and the chasm of death.

With a sad motion Bernard beckoned the leech towards the prostrate form of the patient, and dashing a tear-drop from his heavy lashes, fervently clasped the hand of the mountebank, while he murmured forth words of exhortation and of prayer.

"Save her! Oh, save the gem of my happiness!" fervently implored the artisan. "Treat her as she were the best beloved of princes. What gold I have, freely I give unto thee. But, alas! Bernard Palissy is among the poorest of men."

"And whose fault is it?" chimed in the shrill voice of a woman, who had been sitting by the bedside, in attendance upon the patient. "Were it not for thy vagaries and fantasies, we would not be poor; not at all, Bernard Palissy, were you to follow your own trade, of which even nobles are not ashamed. But no, thou must dabble in chemicals and potter's clay."

"Dame Palissy," mildly interceded the Italian physician, "he has gold enough for my purpose."

"Yea," continued the matron, "for thy purposes, but not for mine and those of me. It ill behooves a child of mine to lie in poverty and destitution, when the hand of sickness has fallen upon her. Ah, Bernard Palissy, bitterly will you rue this waste of precious hours, when she and I are dead and gone!"

Bernard listened unmovedly to the reproaches of his spouse, whose words fell upon a callous ear, until the allusions to the probable fall of his best beloved child touched his heart with anguish, and he eased his over-afflicted bosom by an involuntary shower of tears. The strong man melted before the anticipation of evil, and he who in solitude could have buffeted sickness, sadness, and penury, now shrunk from the finger of destiny. Dame Palissy had wounded the heart of her husband in its most vulnerable point, and, although he deigned no response to her complaints, he experienced the full vehemence of her invectives. Bernard Palissy, like too

many others of his race, was a weak mortal.

Leaving the chamber of sickness, the artisan descended to a laboratory, which, in default of auxiliary aid, he had constructed with his own hands upon the ground floor; and there, after lighting a flambeau, throwing a lurid flame upon the chamber, he commenced the almost incessant toil which had engaged his energies for ten mortal years, to the sore discomfort of Dame Palissy, who saw herself and family deprived of many luxuries, as well from the waste of time her husband bestowed upon his chemical experiments, as from the sums of money expended in the acquisition of costly raw materials by him employed. Dame Palissy was a matter-of-fact individual, and failed to perceive that the road to wealth and fame ran over fragments of broken vases of baked clay.

A singular incident had, ten years before, given a new direction to Palissy's naturally industrious energies. A glass-stainer and decorative artist, Bernard had completed the shattered windows of a cathedral with an admirable tact and talent. To reward the artist for his unwonted merit, the archbishop, in addition to his accustomed recompense, presented Palissy with an Italian vase, upon whose white enamelled surface were clustered groups of animals, birds, and flowers, radiant in their hues of natural beauty. This fascinating gift turned the head of the visionary, whose only dream for the future was to win the art of reproducing similar marvels; and to this end had he devoted ten arduous years of his active existence. Vainly, however, had the artist struggled; for, notwithstanding his restless labors, his visits to the potteries, his researches in every quarter where information was likely to be obtained, the ten years had rolled away, without his having attained the first element desired, as none of his home-made pottery became coated with the slightest tinge of the white enamel, the base of all future operations. But Palissy was a man of stubborn energy, and, after finishing the few jobs at glass-staining a kind Providence threw in his way, (for, as this art had fallen into disuse, occupation at his trade was far from constant), he would retire at night for labor upon the various materials experience and study prompted him to conceive most apt and proper for potter's purposes. In this wise had the artisan squandered, as it were, the earnings of his toil; and while progressing in

nowise to a definite end, he labored manfully to attain the desired mystery. Repeated failures disheartened him in no manner, for Palissy was sensible that to be a great master, it was requisite to serve a long apprenticeship; and he was both master and man.

"Ten golden livres!" murmured the artisan, as he took his position before the rude furnace he had fashioned with his own stalwart hands, after the manner of those ponderous chimneys he had observed at the glass-blowers. "It is a large sum, and would have bought me many pigments, and especially the Italian earths and oriental metals I stand in need of to fabricate the mosaic enamel of my wares. But," he added, with a deep-drawn sigh, "Madeline, creature of God's clay, holy and immaculate, is she not worth all images of mortal creation?"

Then Bernard Palissy, with that religious heroism which ever distinguished his personal career, meekly bowed his head, and prayed Heaven that one like him, obscure and poverty-stricken, might not be rendered wholly disconsolate by the loss of the pet lamb of his fold. Bernard had more than one child; still, none of them save the light-eyed, fair-haired Madeline, sympathized with their father in the modest revel of his ambition; and as sympathy begets love, from unity of thought, the child, reflex of the father's meditations, became the object of his adoration, for in her he worshiped identification with himself.

"Madeline," sadly soliloquized Bernard, as he gathered together the materials he had selected for trial in the oven, and mechanically moulded them into vases of grotesque forms, "thou alone of my household art the spirit of my life, and now shall I lose thee! Oh, God! spare the staff of thy shepherd."

Lost to consciousness of outward things, Palissy discarded the usual habit of his fabrication, and abstractedly seized the materials within his reach, moulding them together without system or order, into an almost shapeless mass of manipulated clay. Mechanically his hands toiled, but his brain wandered; and, before he was conscious of the effects of his labors, there stood before him a vase upon whose rapid and eccentric construction he had expended the entire treasures of his scanty laboratory. So intently had the thoughts of the man become enwrought in internal contemplation of the fate of his offspring, that his frame was

only automatical, working designlessly, but still with an impulse uncontrollable.

When Palissy awoke, as it were, from his dream of thoughtfulness, he was astounded at the havoc he had unintentionally caused among his store of earth, metals, and pigments. At first he was tempted to cast away the mass, moulded as it were in his semi-conscious moment; when, turning his eyes upon the various groups of vases he had moulded by ceaseless labor, manipulated with accuracy of weight and measure, and with skill of chemical and mathematical labor, well-defined variations of the legitimate commixture of earths, covered with the sweat of many laborious years, he despised not the impromptu workmanship of the hour, but magnanimously resolved to yield it a place in his testing furnace.

With a stubborn resolution of physical strength, Bernard aroused himself from the lethargy into which he had momentarily fallen, and, arming himself with the ardor of an enthusiast, he commenced the tedious working of the potter's art. In a second the entire man changed, and, donning his dirt-covered raiment, he plunged into the very heart of manual toil. Throwing open the doors of his furnace, he placed in its fiery bosom, first, the choice pieces of pottery he had fashioned with care and skill, and then, in an obscure corner, he hid the incongruous mass he had thrown together in his moments of mental abstraction.

With a herculean strength little to be expected from the slender form of the artisan, Bernard assiduously piled around his treasures huge blocks of forest pine, and watched the living flame as it sprang from block to block, aiding its ignition by oils and other inflammable compositions. For over an hour, the earnest workman toiled with the energy of an infatuated soul, the sweat rolling in heavy volumes from his brow, while his very raiment was scorched by the intensity of the flames. As he listened to the angry growlings of the blazing timber, as he noted the ruddy glare of the confined conflagration, the heart of Palissy arose within him, and the workman gloried in the dignity of his individual labor.

Overpowered by the intensity of his labor, his mind, distracted by the conflicting emotions of his present condition, anxiously brooding upon the twofold anxieties harrowing him, the weary frame of Bernard unconsciously and irresistibly sought

consolation in slumber. Meditating upon the probability of the visitation of the Angel of Death, his heart sorely racked by an anticipated failure of his long-prosecuted labors, the head of Palissy dropped heavily upon his bosom, his eyes closed despite his evident inclination towards watching the progress of the glowing furnace, and in a few moments the tortured soul of the artisan found refuge in the balmy realms of an honest, hearty sleep. The necessities of animal nature overpowered the physical energy of the enthusiast, but even while the body of the man rested in quietude, his soul, freed from the weight of ceaseless toil, was wafted away amid the fantasies of dream-land.

While Bernard Palissy thus slumbered amid the implements of his self-imposed toil, a strange scene was being enacted in the gloomy chamber wherein rested the beauteous Madeline, now stricken to an unearthly pallor by the passing breath of a malady which had seized upon her in the radiance of blooming health. Close unto the bedside of the suffering girl leaned Dame Palissy, more attentive as a mother than politic as a spouse; while near to her, armed with a mock heroic assumption of professional dignity, stood the pompous charlatan, the famous Italian quack of Saintes, whose medicaments and cosmetics were world-renowned, according to authority of his own creation, as possessing qualities unknown to surgeons of the regular confraternity. Let us wonder not that Dame Palissy conceived the charlatan to be a man of infinite attainments, for, in all ages, gossip creates credence in miracles, and, in her days, superstition constituted a powerful element in the curing of disease. For the mountebank, therefore, had she dispatched her obedient husband, as in search of one gifted with the charge of life and of death; and he, kind soul, whose knowledge of chemistry extended not beyond the commingling of salts and of minerals, snatched at any straw for his beloved one's resurrection.

Drying her tears, upon the apparition of the famous leech, Dame Palissy gazed intently upon the marbled countenance of the quack, as expressionless as the chiseled features of a statue, in the faint hope of reading upon the frigid tablet some traces of hope or of despair. Then the anxious dame imploringly besought some word of consolation, and, in the mute eloquence of tearful eyes, prayed his care and

attention to be bestowed upon the object of her parental solicitude.

"It is well!" solemnly commenced the Italian, throwing aside his heavy garments, which had guarded him against the night air; and, motioning the matron to the bedside with an attitude of imposing deliberation:

But, where is Master Bernard?"

Despite the mournfulness of the occasion, the petulance of Dame Palissy, at this inquiry, could brook no restraint.

"Where," she broke forth, in a comparatively modified ebullition of distain, compared with her customary virulence; "where should he be, save among his pots and wares, his crucibles, and his gimeracks, pounding broken crockery, and wasting our winter's fuel in feeding the hungry maw of a potter's furnace which swallows up our daily bread? Would that he had been in the fiery furnace of Shadrach, before his muddled brain had made him a burner of broken plaster."

"Mother!" rebukingly mourned forth the suffering Madeline, as she turned her glassy eyes imploringly upon the vindictive matron, to check further defamation.

"The maiden hath reason," interrupted the Italian, with an authoritative gesture commanding the Dame's silence. "Master Bernard is seeking after hidden mysteries, incomprehensible to the weaker vessels of our kind, and thirsts after marvels of greatness. For a time, perchance, he may be baffled; but long perseverance and patience will gain its award. Master Bernard will be a reputable burgher, learned and wealthy, if not contented and happy."

A feeble smile of exultation played over the pallid features of the artisan's daughter, and the flush of passing joy mantled on her cheek. Her pains and sufferings were momentarily appeased, for this prophecy of her father's future touched the most sensitive chord of her grateful soul. On the contrary, Dame Palissy, whose faith in the virtues of earth and of minerals was less developed, merely shook her head moodily, as if in absolute denial of the justness of any such conclusion as to her husband's long-procrastinated happiness.

"Maiden," kindly quoth the charlatan, taking the feverish hand of the young woman tenderly within his own, and cautiously scanning the lines upon the palm, "like others of my craft, I am skilled in palmistry, and can read aright the destiny

of mortals by simple signs. Thou wert born beneath proper zodiacal signs, and art not doomed to die in life's early bloom. Thou shalt bask in the renovating light of the true cross; for it is written that thou art one of the few mortals upon whom such glory shall descend."

The Italian spoke in slow and measured tones; still, a spirit of wild animation appeared to have seized upon him, for his words bespoke an inspiration irrecognizable in his ordinary method of speech.

"Speak not, fear not!" continued the charlatan, addressing Dame Palissy;—"guard thy tongue, and dispel not the sanctity of my incantation by word of mouth, for I am to summon to the bedside of thy daughter the guardian angel of her future good. Therefore, in silence obey!"

Dame Palissy mechanically fulfilled the mandate of the visitor, whose person as well as demeanor appeared to her to have undergone a remarkable metamorphosis, for no longer did he seem to be a mere creature of flesh and blood, but had been mysteriously converted into a being of irresistible authority—one who exerted an incomprehensible power over her actions.

"Now to the work of purification," said the charlatan, as the matron assumed a seat in an oaken arm-chair, to which her limbs became almost instantly attached in such a wise as to defy free motion. And with these words the leech placed upon an earthen platter in the centre of the room a handful of herbs, the contents of a package he drew from the folds of his doublet. Applying a flame to these frail fibres of extinct animation, the Italian extinguished the only light burning in the chamber, and for an instant the group were enveloped in partial darkness. Then the mountebank commenced a low chant, in a language unintelligible to his auditor, who remained speechless and wonder-struck, as if partially enchanted by its solemn accents. As the tones of his voice augmented in volume, the burning herbs gave off fleecy clouds of a serene azure light, which, after hovering vaguely around the chamber, congregated as at a common centre around the couch of the slumbering Madeline, encircling her with an atmosphere of dazzling brilliancy, as well as of most fragrant odor.

Terrified, and yet deprived of speech and of motion, Dame Palissy turned her eyes upon the Italian necromancer, who stood calmly at the end of the bed, gazing in sullen animation upon the marvelous

effects of the conjuration his skill had wrought. Upon his dark features hovered a smile of benevolence, which infused new courage into the sinking heart of the terror-stricken matron.

Again the mountebank ceased his chant, and drawing from his bosom a small ruby cross of wondrous purity and of resplendent brilliancy, from the centre of whose jewels, as the Italian lifted it aloft in a reverential mood above his head, there was emitted a beam of dazzling light, such as is given off by the chaste moon in its earlier quarter. Augmenting from a feeble halo, like unto the pale radiance of a single jewel, the mystic beam increased in length and breadth, until, reaching the person of the prostrate maiden, it bathed her lovely face with dancing waves of celestial light. The calm features of Madeline, warmed into a bloom of healthfulness beneath the influence of the grateful ray from the rosy cross, moved not, changed not, when instantaneously the eyes of Dame Palissy, bewildered by the intensity of the miracle, involuntarily closed, and within a short space of time the matron lost consciousness as to everything passing around her.

The rays of the morning sun had penetrated into the work-vault of Master Bernard, before the wearied artisan fully awoke from his slumbers. The fire in his furnace was almost extinct; a few smouldering bits of charcoal, concealed amid the ashes, alone remained from the massive beams he had heaped upon the flames. Still, although vexed in spirit that his carelessness in permitting slumber to overtake him at the most difficult point of his experiment had jeopardized his success, the stout-hearted artisan tarried not to examine the contents of his furnace, but hastened straightway to the chamber of his daughter.

The joy of Palissy knew no bounds, as, bending over the slumbering girl, who on the previous evening appeared stricken by the hand of death, he discovered her completely restored to an incredible state of healthfulness. The fever had departed from her fair frame, and the rosy glow of health and beauty played upon her dimpled cheeks. Then the potter knelt noiselessly by the side of Madeline's couch, and prayed in silent sincerity. The heart of a father poured forth a grateful thanksgiving to the glory of the Father of our race.

Strengthened in heart, Palissy directed his steps to his laboratory, and commenced drawing forth the vases he had manufac-

tured as trial pieces. Alas! one after the other came forth lumps of hardened clay—not a sign of the long-sought-after enamel could be detected—all worthless, useless, a waste of time and money.

The heart of the persevering man sank within him, and Bernard Palissy was about giving himself up to despondency, when he recollected the mass of material, the despised piece of pottery, he had placed contemptuously in the oven. Moodily he drew it forth, when suddenly he gave vent to an exclamation of joy. Upon the entire surface of the rude vase appeared the beautiful white enamel which had for ten years baffled his skill—an enamel as pure, as brilliant, as faultless, as if it came from the hands of the famous Florentine sculptor, Lucca della Robbia, the jealous conservator of this mysterious ware.

"Truly," quoth Bernard, exultingly, "can I well pay the Italian leech the golden livres I have promised. The Lord in his mercy hath blessed his work and mine."

The honest artisan counted out the ten golden coins, the sole wealth possessed by him in money, which he resolutely determined to part with as he stood now upon the threshold of wealth and renown. A few minutes' walk brought him to the door of the charlatan, which was firmly closed and the shop deserted. From the gossip of the neighbors, Palissy learned that his creditor had departed in the middle of the night, and, as he was a stranger in Saintes, none knew or cared whither he was gone.

"He has earned the gold!" murmured the potter, as he returned the coins to his strong box; "and though I may be tempted to its use, I will keep it until his return. He who giveth life to the child of his brother, shall never be wronged by Bernard Palissy, be he stranger or man of kindred."

Bernard Palissy slowly wended his way homeward, after casting a farewell glance upon the closed shop of the mountebank; for, although ignorant of the means employed to resuscitate the energies of his child, he believed himself to be under a debt of gratitude to the Italian in producing her recovery. He had resolved, therefore, to cultivate the friendship of the leech, whose mysterious departure thus placed him still more isolated than heretofore from the society of his fellows.

The potter sighed as he returned the golden coin to his strong box, and regis-

tered a solemn vow that the money should be treasured until the coming of its lawful owner. Bernard rejoiced in the honesty of poverty.

TRIAL THE SECOND.—LUNACY.



IXTEEN years had elapsed since the sturdy Bernard had commenced his experimental labors, and still he had not attained the object of his ambitious toil. True, he had discovered enamels of various tints, with which he decorated porcelain wares, and thus earned a livelihood for himself and family; yet the moneys thus obtained, beyond the absolute necessities of the household, were absorbed in the prosecution of his inquiries. Palissy was a man of resolute economy, and in depriving himself of even the luxuries of the poor, he consecrated to artistry and science that which the world dispenses upon emptiness. Dame Palissy, however, failed to comprehend the secret for this self-denial, and, as she viewed the persons of her neighbors decked with silks and jewelry, even those whose husbands were mere tradesmen or master workmen, her spirit became aroused at the very thought that the sums, which could be expended in a thousand and one vanities, were invariably devoted to blue metals, yellow clay, or some such article of chemistry.

It was the festival of the patronal saint of Saintes, when, in accordance with the established custom of the commune, there was to be publicly crowned, with a coronet of newly-blown roses, the most beautiful and virtuous maiden of the district. The municipality, stern burgesses, who undertook the management of all sublunary affairs, from royal receptions to school-house pageantries, had ordained all the maidens to be assembled upon the green before the mayor's office, when from among them that august functionary would designate her who for the ensuing year should reign over them as the "Queen of the Roses."

"Goest thou to the festival?" tartly inquired Dame Palissy, as she laughed mockingly at the patient toil of her husband, who had watched for five consecutive nights and days by the side of his furnace,

wherein he had deposited a vase which was to constitute the masterpiece of his art."

"Thinkest thou," calmly returned Bernard, as if the words of scorn fell unheeded upon his ears, "that I have time to waste upon idle pageantries—the dance of fools, who caper for an hour, and then sink into obscurity?"

"No," shrilly rejoined the indignant matron; "but thou hast time and money to waste upon these nasty mixtures of pounded clay, which will be no more use to you than a fifth wheel to a coach. And art thou stupid enough to suppose that I, for one, am willing that I and my children are going to be longer starved, while thou art a laughing-stock for every sound-headed man in the commune?"

Bernard smiled, and opening the doors of his furnace, added a piece of timber to the blazing fire. Dame Palissy augmented in vehemence at this demonstration of unconcern, and she vented her anger in still more unmeasured tones of reproach.

"Yes, yes, Master Bernard," she threateningly continued, with violent gesticulations "it is high-time for these tomfooleries to finish. Sixteen years is long enough for one to revel in misery; and now, it will be put a stop to. Thinkest thou, idiot, that I can longer suffer our fair and beauteous daughter, the pride and envy of our town, to be longer clothed in rags of wretchedness, and perchance become the wife of some journeyman potter? No, no, Master Bernard; you have run your course, and mine will now begin."

"Mother!—mother!" exclaimed Madeline, whose glad accents chimed in with tuneful melody upon the soul of the artisan, whose heart would have sunk beneath the continuous bickerings of his spouse, were it not cherished by the sympathetic attentions of his well-beloved child—"they have chosen me, and come you not and see me crowned?"

Madeline, who had grown up a girl of peerless beauty—one of those nymph-like forms poets have chosen to people their Arcadian plains—rushed breathlessly into the presence of her parents, her cheeks flushed with the animation of triumph. No wonder, indeed, that the artisan and his wife were proud of their daughter's charms, for a fairer creature could not be found in the wide expanse of Christendom.

"Oh, give me joy!" gladly continued the damsel, "for I am chosen Queen of the Roses!"

"Yea," quoth the potter, as he turned

his affectionate glance upon Madeline, "I give thee joy, for thou art worthy of honor. But remember, my child, I take no pride in thy exaltation above thy fellows, save on the score of virtuous merit. Believe me, my child, it is the heart, and not the crown, which creates the monarch. Guard, therefore, against the temptations of luxury and of flattery; for, once let the soul within be stained with vanity, and the poor case of clay, beauteous as the Deity has created it, becomes a piece of fallen misery."

"Madeline, joy of my heart!" interrupted Dame Palissy, who heartily despised the frigid maxims of semi-theologic morality which the potter constantly employed in his sentences, "thou art indeed worthy, not only of the crown of roses, but of jewels; and, were it in my power, freely would I give it unto thee. Still, despair not, my Madeline; others poorer than thou art, have become princesses of the land, and who knows what may be lot of thine."

"Child, child!" warmly interposed Master Bernard, "listen not to the fair language of the temptress. Recollect, Madeline, thou art but the daughter of an artisan, thou canst never be the companion of proud nobles; and if thou wearest aught of earthly jewels, it will be only through sacrifice of gems of heavenly honor!"

"Pooh, pooh!" indignantly returned the matron. "Don't longer listen to the croakings of this raven, who would sacrifice you and me to his pots, vases, and dirty clay. Come, my child, let us to the *mairie*, where there, at least, you can win these smiles denied thee at home."

Madeline advanced to her father, and gave him a kiss of filial love. The rough artisan warmly pressed her to his bosom and sighed, for he inwardly feared that this fair and lovely creature was discontented with the lowly state in which the misfortune of birth had placed her. His eyes became suffused with tears; for, in the temptation of the vain ceremonial in which she was about to participate, he dreaded there might lurk the secret poison of pampered pride, which might allure her weakness to more fatal steps.

"Father!" calmly said Madeline, noticing her parent's ill-disguised emotion, "thou dost not enjoy thy daughter's triumph. Wert thou to say the word, I would relinquish the crown."

"Thou shalt do nothing of the kind," warmly interposed Dame Palissy, "to

please him or any other croaking tyrant."

And with a movement betokening her supremacy over philosophical weakness, Dame Palissy urged her daughter out of the potter's laboratory, and defiantly shook her hand at her presumptive lord and master, who brushed away the tear-drops with his horny hand, and tranquilly reassumed the tenor of his labors.

The patronal *fete* of Saintes was a prodigy of rustic jubilation, and the congregated crowds gazed in wonderment at the apparently inexhaustible marvels of municipal invention. Never on any previous occasion had the mayor and his *echevins* labored more assiduously to amuse as well as to instruct their constituents, and never before had there been assembled upon the *grand place* of Saintes a more motley crowd of mountebanks, jugglers saltimbanches, and mendicants, of every variety.

The most notable feature of the festivity, however, was the rose coronation. Preceded by a parochial Swiss, whose livery had been reburnished to a resplendent degree for the occasion, the procession of youthful damsels, robed in a common garb of purity, wended their way to a decorated canopy, encircled with green boughs and rustic emblems, beneath which was erected a species of judgment-seat, quaintly covered with armorial devices. Arrived at this point the bevy of maidens respectfully halted and awaited the arrival of a counter procession of young men, the flower of Saintean chivalry, who, headed by the brave champion of municipal liberties, a stalwart youth, whose armor of heavy plates told repeated tales of well-fought campaigns, served as a guard for the bodies of the potentates of the commune. Then stepped forth, flushed with consciousness of his dignity, the Mayor of Saintes, and, waving his hand with regal graciousness, commanded proclamation to be made of his will and pleasure to hold a court of beauty. Whereupon a herald, whose musty garments bore the trappings of a long past generation, formally opened court, ordaining Madeline Palissy to be Sovereign of Beauty.

Dame Palissy was not the only person who experienced a thrill of admiration and of pleasure upon witnessing the ascent of Madeline to the steps of the throne, where she received in due form of chivalric ceremonial the coronet of fresh-blown roses, interwined with blossoms from the orange tree. But when the fair girl, with modest

hesitation, assumed her chair of honor, and blushing acknowledged the homage of her subjects, a wild enthusiasm pervaded the crowd, and the hearts even of rival damsels beat warmly in admiration of the Santean beauty—their peerless sovereign.

"Whom does the Queen claim as her champion?" solemnly demanded the mock heroic herald, and each youthful courtier strained his eyes in anxiety to behold the young man who was to be honored by the approbation of the fair monarch. A long pause elapsed, and the herald re-enunciated his query; still Madeline with downcast eyes preserved her silence, for the heart of the virgin had as yet been untortured by the trials of a love passion.

"And wilt thou permit me, most beauteous lady, to become thy humble knight and devoted servitor?"

At the utterance of these words, in clear and faultless accents, the entire auditory turned to the direction whence they proceeded, and there beheld a strange man, of comparative youth, but habited in the richness and luxury which distinguished the nobles of France at that period. Madeline turned, too, her glances upon the handsome intruder; a smile played upon her features, while unresistingly she suffered her dainty hand to be carried to the lips of her kneeling champion.

"Monsieur the Duke does us an honor," interrupted the Mayor of the commune, proud of his participation in a pageantry in which a noble of high rank condescended to be an actor; but the handsome courtier, with an ill-disguised frown, rebuked the betrayal of his rank and dignity.

The functionary held his peace, while the stranger gracefully led his sovereign from her throne and escorted her through the crowd, thronging the scene of the spectacle.

"Oh, Madeline!" joyously exclaimed Dame Palissy, as she threw herself upon the neck of her daughter, and almost wept with over-exaltation, "thou art well worthy of this triumph, even if your poor mother says so."

The stranger turned and looked with unreserved astonishment upon the poverty-stricken garments of the luckless dame, whose pride was touched incontinently by this species of mute disavowal.

"It is all the fault of that stupid Palissy," muttered the dame, conciliatingly; "had he been a man, and worked as other men work, neither I nor my daughter would have been in this wretched plight."

"Thou art the wife of Bernard Palissy?" remarked the cavalier.

"Who spends all he earns in pigments and bits of pottery," interrupted the dame, vehemently, "otherwise the Lord knows my daughter would be fit to take her place among the proudest beauties of the realm."

"And who knows but that the fair Madeline may yet rule a beauty at the gay court of France," remarked the stranger, "for her destiny is in her own hands, and she can reap the harvest of riches. There be few more fair than this gentle maiden, and what thinkest thou, worthy dame, of driving in your carriage, honored and esteemed as the mother of a princess?"

"But what of Bernard?" hesitatingly inquired the matron, whose mind had become enchanted by the intimation of her probable elevation.

"By thine own showing the man is a brute—a lunatic," responded the courtier, "who doth fail to appreciate thy worthiness and the peerless beauty of this damsel, and wastes his stores upon vagrancies of intellect."

"Mother, respect my father, whatever may be his faults," quoth Madeline, whose sympathies were ever inclined towards filial obedience.

The young cavalier particularly noted this tendency on the part of the young girl, and framing an excuse, withdrew with dame Palissy to such a distance that their conversation could not be overheard.

"The gossip of thy neighbors," commenced the courtier, artfully contriving to touch the sinister chord of the dame's temperament, "tells me that thou art sore afflicted by the extravagance of thy husband's mania. Hast thou ever bethought thee of a remedy?"

"Of a verity have I," responded the matron, "for I am sore afflicted with his idle insanity, which drives me and mine into misery; but I know not the manner of preventing the evil which hath consumed him."

"Then hie to the Provost, my good woman," returned the courtier; "to him proclaim thy grievances, and bid him arrest the madman in my name."

"Prithee, thy name?" inquired the dame.

"Tell him the Duke of Guise has sent thee on this mission, and the officers of the bailiwick will execute the mandate."

Dame Palissy gazed in admiration upon the young noble, and without reluctance determined to avail herself of his advice.

The spirit of revenge long dormant in the breast of the dame, burst forth in full virulence, and the prospect of the continued patronage of a ducal house, annihilated all domestic affection.

For six consecutive days had Bernard Palissy watched in nervous anxiety the burning of his furnace, wherein he had placed a masterpiece of pottery, upon which he had labored assiduously for many weeks. Daily he saw his pile of lumber, which had cost him a world of patient labor in accumulation, diminish, and still he had not acquired the degree of heat, necessary to insure the perfection of his work; and now with a sigh he deposited his last fragment amid the blazing embers. With sweating and dirt-begrimed brow he bent over the furnace, as the breath of despair whispered to him the probabilities of failure. He looked around in every direction for a further supply of fuel, but, alas, his stock of material had been exhausted to such a degree that even shreds and shavings failed him. At this momentous trial, a spirit of frenzy, brooking no control, seized upon the artisan, and determined him to a work of destruction, which might secure the triumph of his toils. With herculean strength—the energy of his despair—he dashed into fragments his chairs, tables, and other articles of domestic furniture, and recklessly committed the wreck of his household to the embrace of the devouring elements.

At the sight of this devastation, the few neighbors allured by curiosity to watch the progress of the labor, whose course had been marked by the almost interminable emission of smoke and flame from the potter's chimney, fled in affright from the theatre of self-sacrifice, loudly proclaiming that lunacy had suddenly seized upon the luckless Palissy. Still the undaunted Bernard progressed in his excitement until nought available for his purpose could be found within his reach.

Notwithstanding the patronage of the young and powerful Duke of Guise, dame Palissy found the Provost of Saintes lothe to entertain her complaint against her spouse. The sturdy burgher, who, although convinced of the unprofitableness of Bernard's labor, could not detect in his conduct a judicial cause of action, hesitated in granting the requisite commission for the potter's apprehension; for the magistracy of that period maintained themselves aloof from the prejudices of the notables. With an excellent policy, he exhorted dame Palissy

to marital obedience, and promised to eradicate the cause of her grief by an argumentative lecture to the contumacious Bernard. At this juncture the arrival of the neighbors, bringing tidings of Bernard's novel conduct, and the testimony of eye witnesses of the work of destruction, turned the balance of justice to the favor of the matron's inclination. A man may starve himself and family in the baking of crockery, according to the reasoning of the worthy provost, without suspicion of lunacy; but to immolate oaken chairs and tables to the work of pottery could exhibit nothing short of downright and incurable insanity. In accordance with this judicial opinion, Bernard Palissy was ordained to be a dangerous personage, with destructive forces threatening the right of property, and the officers of the court were commanded to effect his apprehension as a demented being.

Dame Palissy thankfully received the enunciation of the decree, which was to rid her of the encumbrance of a wretched existence, and urging the precipitate departure of the Provost's subordinates, started off to revisit the desolated hearthside, followed by a crowd of curiosity-hunters commingled with the rabble of the commune.

From the moment when the enraged matron and the attendant *huissier* invaded the sanctuary of Palissy's labor, he was assailed by the dame with full virulence of vindictive spleen. The potter paid little or no attention to the entry of the crowd, but calmly and deliberately extinguished the dying embers of his furnace, and prepared to unbar its massive, hermetically sealed doors. Animated by the presumptive success of his most ambitious aspirations, he worked noiselessly and vigorously, while a cold sweat stood upon his forehead.

"Bernard Palissy," quoth the *huissier*, "our worthy provost has ordained thy arrest, as a madman, and charges thy instant custody."

"Madman!" vehemently responded the artisan, "is such the judgment of the world and of thy master?"

"Even so, Master Bernard," meekly replied the official. "It hath been decreed upon the evidence of thy wife and thy neighbors."

"Behold, then, the work of a madman!" proudly rejoined Palissy, as he advanced to the mouth of the oven and drew forth the first of those grotesque and gorgeous

pieces of pottery which he alone, of living men at that period, was able to fabricate.

The crowd gathered around to gaze upon the curiously wrought vase, upon whose enamelled surfaces were grouped, with strange and wondrous effect, birds of the air, flowers of the earth, and animals of the field, all displayed with surprisingly natural accuracy of color and delineation.

Each beholder murmured forth his approbation, and even Dame Palissy stifled for a moment the feeling of resentment she ever evinced against her husband's habitual indulgence in the potter's art, and momentarily rejoiced at the complete triumph of his perseverance and skill.

Bernard Palissy contemplated the work of his sixteen years' arduous experience, and then, turning to the admiring group, he smiled upon them with an expression of contemptuous pity.

"Madman," he murmured, almost inaudibly, "indeed am I, to toil and labor for an ignorant herd, who know not the true value, the honest dignity of physical toil. Rather would they be the lilies of Solomon, fattening in indolence on the wages of sin, than toil for the honors of Hercules."

Then a sudden flush passed over the features of the potter; his eyes rolled wildly; his entire frame shook in convulsions, and he dropped listlessly upon some fragments of unused timber. The excitement and the enthusiasm which had buoyed him up during his prolonged struggle, abruptly deserted him in the hour of triumph, and Bernard was for the moment smitten by a violent fever on the brain.

While hundreds of the curious thronged the potter's workshop to view the marvellous creation of his art, the maker of that work lay upon his humble pallet, nursed by a sympathizing neighbor, for Bernard was wifeless and almost childless.

In answer to the supplications of the suffering man, tender-hearted visitors had vainly sought for tidings of both Dame Palissy and her daughter, who had mysteriously disappeared previously to the close of the Festival of Roses.

"O Lord!" solemnly ejaculated the potter, as, after weeks of illness, he recovered strength sufficient to shoulder his walking-staff, "give me but strength to seek my erring child. Oh, Madeline! light of my soul, why hast thou rendered me childless."

With these words the Potter started upon his pilgrimage, in search of wife and child.

[To be concluded in next Number.]

THE "TWIN ARTS."

SCULPTURE and Painting are generally classed together as equals, and great artists, in each department, are given nearly the same comparative position. If both departments are "Fine Arts," and if many good sculptors are also good painters, there still are great and radical differences in the principles of the really two professions. The sculptor deals in figure—the human frame forming the chief subject of his chisel. To its study, therefore, must he devote his best powers. The anatomy of the body is his highway to success. Once initiated in the mysteries of the body, he begins the work of copying—not with the hues of a well-stored pallet, but with a chisel and block of marble. These are all his means, and with these must he attain his ends. The painter is no "slave to such a circumstance." He flies in the face of all nature with his brushes; his subjects are everywhere, everything; his taste is trained to no galling harness; but with hues, rich and rare as those in the keeping of the flowers, and light and shade for assistants, he enters at once upon his pleasing studies, and accomplishment readily comes out of his dreams. At the patient toil of the sculptor over his mud model—at the later processes, merely mechanical, by which a statue is brought to the light—he laughs, and shows in bold relief the multitudinous figures of man and beast, the fields and woods, the seas and rivers, the mountains and valleys, the skies, and the universe beyond, of his own glaring canvas. The sculptor deals with one; the painter with many. The one has only clay and marble for his companionship; the other has all the beauty and richness of form and color of a profuse creation. One depicts one passion, one feeling; the other portrays many passions, many feelings, many languages. So widely separated are the two apparently twin professions. Of the comparative dignity and excellence of the labors of each we shall not speak, as no brief exposition could deal fittingly with such a subject. We have simply named the salient points and diversities which distinguish the labors of the two artists, in order to suggest to many minds the impropriety of classing the twain as one and the same. They are "twin arts" only as they are allied to the Ideal—to the Real, they are professions distinguished by radical differences.